

# COMMUNITY CULTURE INDEX

Understanding Belonging in the Workplace

## 2022-23 COMMUNITY REPORT

CHATTANOOGA



Empowering communities with a data-driven tool to assess the inclusiveness of local employers' practices.

PRESENTED BY:



HINTON & COMPANY



Urban League of  
Greater Chattanooga, Inc.

Dear friends,

The inaugural Community Culture Index (CCI) for Chattanooga was developed and launched following a period of upheaval in our city and across our country, including a global pandemic, the racial justice reckoning after George Floyd's murder, and the #MeToo movement. Amid this tumult and time of disruptions, many organizations made bold commitments to inclusive practices that could advance their people, regardless of their background. We decided to develop an instrument to measure if and how these commitments are being implemented, as well as what we can learn from each other.

Specifically, the CCI aims to understand better how our corporate, non-profit, and government sectors are progressing toward these efforts. This report presents the results and recommendations from our inaugural survey. Representing sixty organizations in the Chattanooga region, the findings offer a rigorous and localized assessment of whether or not employers are doing the work to create more inclusive cultures. Data from these responses are organized into four main categories: Leadership & Workforce, Recruiting & Hiring, Culture & Retention, and Partnerships. Within each, we've identified particular challenges and areas of growth for employers, as well as an actionable "playbook" that leaders can use to make more progress. At the conclusion of this report, you'll find a summary of local and national resources that may be helpful to those looking to expand their DEI strategy.

On behalf of the many partners who made this project possible and the regional businesses and organizations who took part, we are proud to share this report. Together, we continue to learn from and about one another, and through that exchange of ideas, our community is becoming a stronger and more welcoming place for everyone.

Sincerely,

Wade Hinton, Esq.  
CEO and Founder  
Hinton & Company

Candy Johnson  
President and CEO  
Urban League of Greater Chattanooga

# PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

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The CCI is based on data gathered from organizations in various sectors. The project team analyzed the data to understand better whether Chattanooga's employers were embedding inclusive practices in the workplace. Since many of these organizations were asked these questions for the first time, the survey used for the CWCI was completely confidential.

60

Total Participants

43

SMALL TO MID-SIZED

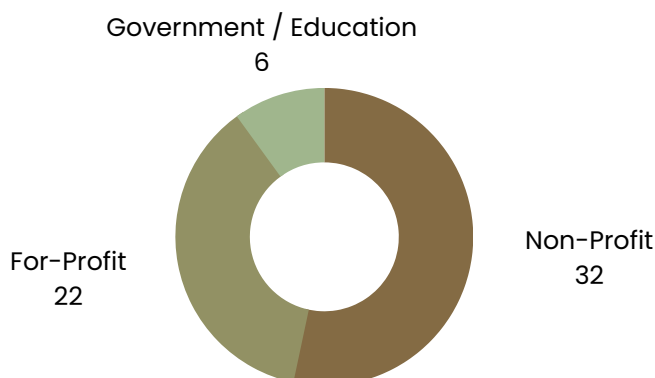
10-749 employees

17

LARGE

750+ employees

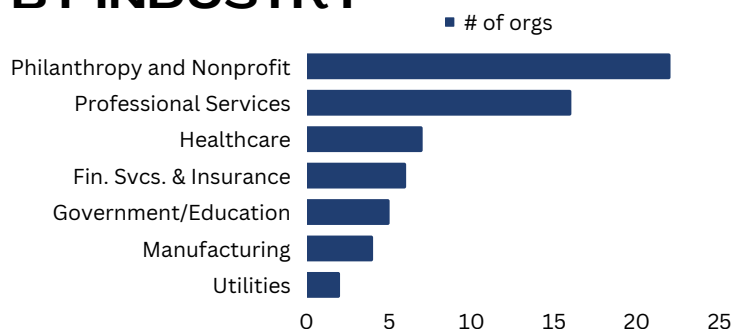
## PARTICIPANTS BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



## IMPACTED CHATTANOOGA AREA EMPLOYEES

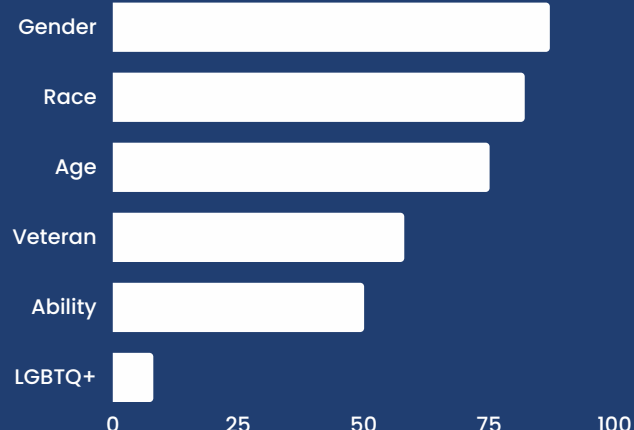
37,300

## BY INDUSTRY



## PARTICIPANT TRENDS

### Dimensions of Diversity Captured by Participants



### DEI Program Budgets

48%

of participating organizations increased their budgets over the past two years.

67%

of participating organizations have budgets under \$100,000.

# PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

3

We remain grateful to the organizations listed below for their willingness to participate in the inaugural CCI. The number of participants should encourage the Chattanooga community that inclusion matters in this region.

AIM Center	Husch Blackwell LLP
Astec Industries	Kenco
Baker Donelson	La Paz
Beeler Impression	Nurture the Next
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Parkridge Hospital
BrightBridge Capital	Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults
CBL Properties	Pinnacle Bank
CCCS of Chattanooga	Reflection Riding Arboretum & Nature Center
Cempa Community Care	RockPoint Bank, N.A.
Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C.	Ruby Falls
Chattanooga Autism Center, Inc	Scenic City Clay Arts
Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise	Signal Centers
Chattanooga Room in the Inn	SmartBank
Chattanooga State	Speech and Hearing Center
Chattanooga Tourism Co.	Steam Logistics
Chattanooga Zoo	Tennessee Aquarium
CHI Memorial	Tennessee Valley Authority
City of Chattanooga	Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union
CO.LAB	The Enterprise Center
Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga	The Montessori School
Creative Discovery Museum	The Sasha Group
Environmental Service Group	United Way of Greater Chattanooga
EPB	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Erlanger Health System	US Xpress
Erlanger Health System Foundation	Vision Hospitality Group
First Property Management	Volkswagen Group of America
First Things First	Wacker Chemical Corporation
Gestamp	Welcome Home of Chattanooga
Girls Inc	WTCI
Hunter Museum of American Art	



"The competition for terrific talent is intense and getting tougher all the time, and organizations like ours are looking for every advantage as we grow and recruit. The CCI gives us a useful window into how other employers are embedding inclusive practices at their organizations and how our region ranks overall."

**Dionne Jenkins**

Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion

# COMMUNITY CULTURE INDEX: CHATTANOOGA

*Belonging in the Workplace*

## TOP INSIGHTS

### 1 DEI Matters to Chattanooga-area employers.

The first-ever CCI had an impressive turnout, with 60 participants representing over 37,000 employees in the region. This number signifies that inclusive practices are important to workplaces across the region. Although we should acknowledge some bias in the report's findings since participants already recognize the importance of inclusion, there remains a reason to celebrate the significant number of employees being represented and feel confident in the positive impact of these efforts on the community.

### 2 The talent we are looking for is already here.

According to the survey, a significant majority (over 67%) of the participants indicated that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) workers were the most challenging identity group to recruit. People of color make up almost 40% of Chattanooga's population. This number presents an opportunity for Chattanooga organizations to play a significant role in meeting their talent needs by investing and preparing more people of color for career opportunities.

### 3 Having an inclusion strategy is not enough to result in making progress.

Over 70% of the businesses surveyed have a plan for promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), but many need more resources to implement their plan. Some respondents expressed frustration that their organization's leadership needs to prioritize inclusion, while others cited challenges in implementing DEI policies and practices due to lean organizational structures. Participants indicated that when their organizations do not implement a strategy, their DEI efforts can feel like performative inclusion programs.



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*Prioritizing diversity as a strategic objective can benefit an organization's equity and inclusion. But, diversity in leadership remains a challenge, with a significant need for more board and senior positions. Strategy development is crucial, and effective implementation of it requires champions for change. Many organizations struggle to implement their DEI strategy, which can lead to performative rather than authentic efforts.*

Over **70% of organizations** report having an enterprise-wide DEI strategy.



## THE CHALLENGE

Many struggle with implementation of their DEI strategy because of a **lack of capacity** or resources.

**78% report DEI concepts are embedded** into the overall strategic business objectives.



## THE UPSIDE

Organizations that took steps to **embed DEI practices** into their operations scored higher in other areas of the overall survey than those who had not.

## PLAYBOOK FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- **Assess** your organization's inclusivity, identify gaps, and evaluate what is working.
- **Set SMART goals** aligned with your organization's values, starting with smaller ones.
- **Identify an owner(s)** to help achieve goals, with leadership involvement in creating an inclusive culture.
- **Leverage available resources**, such as joining groups or utilizing DEI grants.
- **Start small** by implementing low-cost DEI initiatives.
- **Engage employees and stakeholders** in defining the DEI strategy to tap into existing knowledge and resources.



## BIG IDEA FOR COMMUNITIES!

*Create a DEI mentoring program for organizations that pair organizations from different industries to work together, share experiences and practices, and hold each other accountable for progress. Whether it is a large employer partnering with a nonprofit or a government entity paired with a small business, the aim is to let organizations know that their inclusion journey does not have to be done in isolation.*

*Increasing diversity in leadership teams is highly correlated with the evolving diversity of the larger organization. However, finding BIPOC employees presented the biggest challenge in recruiting diverse candidates. Organizations need to be intentional about their recruiting and hiring processes to ensure opportunities to increase underrepresented talent are not being overlooked.*

The data indicates one fifth of participants have **reviewed their hiring process for potential bias.**

 **20%**

## THE CHALLENGE

Neglecting **fair and unbiased hiring processes** can hinder organizations from achieving hiring goals.

**67% of participants** indicated that finding BIPOC employees is the most challenging.

 **67%**

## THE UPSIDE

While it's clear work still needs to be done, there is a silver lining. On average, **32% of respondents are in the process of setting hiring goals for underrepresented groups.**

## PLAYBOOK FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- **Re-examine Hiring Process:** Ensure inclusivity and eliminate biases in hiring processes by making measurable changes if necessary.
- **Utilize Employee Referrals:** Encourage BIPOC employees to refer friends and family members.
- **Utilize Online Platforms:** Authentically use social media and online platforms to reach a wider audience of potential candidates.
- **Form Partnerships:** Partner with groups to diversify your workforce at the job level.
- **Train HR and Interviewers:** Provide DEI training to hiring managers to recognize the value of diversity and mitigate biases.
- **Assess Brand:** Review touchpoints to ensure they genuinely represent your commitment to an inclusive experience for employees.

## BIG IDEA FOR COMMUNITIES!



*The Public Education Foundation, in partnership with local foundations and companies, launched Step-Up - a program aimed at placing high school students from historically underrepresented groups in internships across the Chattanooga region. There exists an opportunity to do something similar for college students from these groups who are enrolled at local universities or other 4-year institutions outside the area but are natives of Hamilton County.*

*To advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), organizations should connect talent/HR investments to DEI by providing consistent feedback and giving employees a voice. A lack of investment in pipelines to develop underrepresented groups contributes to a lack of diversity in leadership. Transparency is also essential, and employers should share demographic data with employees to promote accountability.*

Respondents report **17% of employers share demographic data** with employees.

 **17%**

## THE CHALLENGE

**Transparency** is still new and publicly traded companies feel more pressure to do so.

And 17% reported some program aimed at **developing** underrepresented groups

 **17%**

## THE UPSIDE

More than half of participants have **employee-sponsored groups supporting DEI**, ranging from employee resource groups to task forces or committees.

## PLAYBOOK FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- **Identify career paths** and provide necessary support (training, mentoring, leadership programs)
- **Review and enhance compensation**, benefits, and employee well-being resources
- **Show appreciation** and recognition for employees' achievements
- **Promote diversity and inclusion at all levels** of the organization through policies and practices
- **Provide diversity and inclusion training** to educate employees.
- **Encourage open communication** and transparency.
- **Foster a sense of belonging** through events celebrating diversity and promoting inclusivity.

## BIG IDEAS FOR COMMUNITIES!



*Host a quarterly event that brings together community groups focused on historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to enhance connections.*



*Develop a website or booklet with BIPOC-specific amenities for new hires to enhance their comfort in the community. Share during onboarding or recruitment to provide a helpful resource.*



Over half of organizations intentionally diversify their vendor selection to include businesses owned by underrepresented groups. However, measurement can be difficult. Nonetheless, supplier diversity policies should not be left to large organizations, as small organizations have vendors and can establish commitments.

27% of organizations indicate they keep records of **vendor and supplier diversity**.

27%

## THE CHALLENGE

With a majority of participants citing **technology or resources as a barrier to measurement**, it is challenging to determine impact.

Almost 70% of organizations cite **DEI as a priority when partnering** with organizations.

68%

## THE UPSIDE

Being transparent about your data may **attract vendors who share your commitment** to diversity in your procurement process.

## PLAYBOOK FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- **Conduct an Inventory.** What gets measured gets managed. Organizations should take an inventory of their partnerships to identify areas for improvement and next steps.
- **Align Giving to DEI-related Goals.** Organizations should identify their DEI priorities and connect with community programs that connect to those priorities.
- **Community Outreach.** Be intentional about meeting with leaders from underrepresented communities to establish partnerships and engage in community outreach.
- **Ask for Vendor Referrals.** Connect with current vendors and partners for referrals to diverse vendors and organizations.
- **Be Transparent.** Align your procurement process with your DEI goals and make it transparent to attract vendors who share those values.

## BIG IDEA FOR COMMUNITIES!



Whether supporting current efforts by Chattanooga Business Elite or the City of Chattanooga, creating a go-to directory of underrepresented businesses would address a challenge for some organizations to identify vendors that support their commitment to supplier diversity.

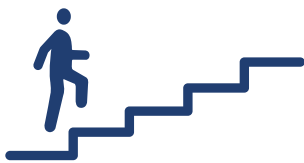
The Community Culture Index is a series of questions about leading practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Questions were identified as most correlated to either diversity, equity, or inclusion. 25 questions were part of the scoring rubric.

The categories the questions, as well as the DEI maturity stages, are as follows:



ORGANIZATIONAL DEI MATURITY STAGES

FOUNDATIONAL  
(0 - 10)



Basic inclusive practices have either been established or are being developed by organizations.

DEVELOPING  
(11 - 19)



Organizations have moved beyond basic inclusive practices and adopted a more proactive approach to meet the needs of the business, clients, and community.

ADVANCED  
(20 - 25)



Organizations have implemented fully-deployed inclusive programs and policies, and elements are being incorporated into their daily operations.

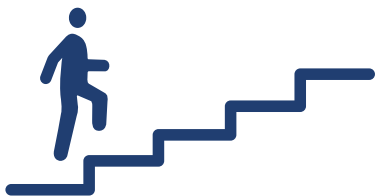
During the survey, each of the 60 participating organizations was assigned a score based on their responses to 25 predetermined questions. This evaluation process categorized each organization as foundational, developing, advanced, depending on their respective scores. Additionally, the community score was calculated as the average of all the individual scores, providing an overall performance measure for the group.

## DEI MATURITY STAGES

**FOUNDATIONAL**  
(0 - 10)

**20%**

of organizations



**DEVELOPING**  
(11 - 19)

**52%**

of organizations



**ADVANCED**  
(20 - 25)

**28%**

of organizations



## COMMUNITY CULTURE INDEX



**DEVELOPING**

Average score of participating organizations was 15 out of 25 scored questions which falls into the category of progressive.

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

### RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN U.S.

The BIPOC Project	<a href="https://www.thebipocproject.org/">https://www.thebipocproject.org/</a>
The Anti-Racism Project	<a href="https://www.antiracismproject.org/">https://www.antiracismproject.org/</a>
Easterseals Intersection Collective: Disabilities + BIPOC Youth	<a href="https://www.easterseals.com/get-involved/intersection-collective/">https://www.easterseals.com/get-involved/intersection-collective/</a>
National Association of Black Accountants	<a href="https://nabainc.org/">https://nabainc.org/</a>
ASCEND Conference for Asians in Finance, Accounting, and Business	<a href="http://ascendleadership.org/">http://ascendleadership.org/</a>
Association of Latino Professionals for America	<a href="https://www.alpfa.org/">https://www.alpfa.org/</a>
National Society of Black Engineers	<a href="https://www.nsbe.org/">https://www.nsbe.org/</a>
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers	<a href="https://shpe.org/">https://shpe.org/</a>
National Association of African-Americans in Human Resources	<a href="http://naaahr.org/">http://naaahr.org/</a>
National Urban League	<a href="http://nul.org/">http://nul.org/</a>

### WOMEN

National Organization for Women	<a href="https://now.org/">https://now.org/</a>
Equality Now	<a href="https://www.equalitynow.org/">https://www.equalitynow.org/</a>
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)	<a href="https://srhrforall.org/">https://srhrforall.org/</a>
Engender Health	<a href="https://www.engenderhealth.org/">https://www.engenderhealth.org/</a>
Center for Reproductive Rights	<a href="https://reproductiverights.org/">https://reproductiverights.org/</a>
Feminist Majority Foundation	<a href="https://feminist.org/">https://feminist.org/</a>
Global Fund for Women	<a href="https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/">https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/</a>
Donor Direct Action	<a href="https://donordirectaction.org/">https://donordirectaction.org/</a>
Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)	<a href="https://wedo.org/">https://wedo.org/</a>
Rise Up	<a href="https://riseuptogether.org/">https://riseuptogether.org/</a>
Time's Up	<a href="https://timesupnow.org/">https://timesupnow.org/</a>

# RESOURCES

10

## ABILITY

Access Living	<a href="https://www.accessliving.org/">https://www.accessliving.org/</a>
ADAPT	<a href="https://adapt.org">https://adapt.org</a>
American Association of People with Disabilities	<a href="https://www.aapd.com/">https://www.aapd.com/</a>
The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities	<a href="https://www.c-c-d.org/">https://www.c-c-d.org/</a>
The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	<a href="https://dredf.org/">https://dredf.org/</a>
Disabled in Action	<a href="https://disabledinaction.org/">https://disabledinaction.org/</a>
Equip for Equality	<a href="https://www.equipforequality.org/">https://www.equipforequality.org/</a>
Medicare Rights Center	<a href="https://www.medicarerights.org/">https://www.medicarerights.org/</a>
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition	<a href="https://mymdrc.org/">https://mymdrc.org/</a>
TASH	<a href="https://tash.org/">https://tash.org/</a>
RespectAbility.org	<a href="https://www.respectability.org/">https://www.respectability.org/</a>

## LGBTQIA+

Family Equality Council	<a href="https://www.familyequality.org/">https://www.familyequality.org/</a>
Human Rights Campaign	<a href="https://www.hrc.org/">https://www.hrc.org/</a>
Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)	<a href="https://pflag.org/">https://pflag.org/</a>
Gay & Lesbians Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)	<a href="https://www.glad.org/">https://www.glad.org/</a>
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund	<a href="https://www.lambdalegal.org/">https://www.lambdalegal.org/</a>
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Educators Network (GLSEN)	<a href="https://www.glsen.org/">https://www.glsen.org/</a>
Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA)	<a href="https://www.glma.org/">https://www.glma.org/</a>
National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)	<a href="https://nglcc.org/">https://nglcc.org/</a>
National Organizations of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals, Inc. (NOGLSTP)	<a href="https://noglstp.org/">https://noglstp.org/</a>
National Gay Pilots Association (NGPA)	<a href="https://www.ngpa.org/">https://www.ngpa.org/</a>
The Association of LGBTQ Journalists (NLGJA)	<a href="https://www.nlgja.org/">https://www.nlgja.org/</a>
Lambda Literary	<a href="https://lambdaliterary.org/">https://lambdaliterary.org/</a>
Pride at Work	<a href="https://www.prideatwork.org/">https://www.prideatwork.org/</a>
Out and Equal Workplace Advocates	<a href="https://outandequal.org/">https://outandequal.org/</a>
Modern Military Association of America (formerly known as OutServe-SLDN)	<a href="https://modernmilitary.org/">https://modernmilitary.org/</a>
Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE)	<a href="https://sagenyc.org/">https://sagenyc.org/</a>



## VETERANS

The American Freedom Fund	<a href="https://americanfreedomfund.org/">https://americanfreedomfund.org/</a>
The American Legion	<a href="https://www.legion.org/">https://www.legion.org/</a>
Gold Star Wives of America	<a href="https://www.goldstarwives.org/">https://www.goldstarwives.org/</a>
Blinded Veterans Association	<a href="https://bva.org/">https://bva.org/</a>
Bunker Labs	<a href="https://bunkerlabs.org/">https://bunkerlabs.org/</a>
Disabled American Veterans	<a href="https://www.dav.org/get-help-now/">https://www.dav.org/get-help-now/</a>
Marine Corps League	<a href="https://www.mcnational.org/">https://www.mcnational.org/</a>
Military Order of the Purple Heart	<a href="https://www.purpleheart.org/">https://www.purpleheart.org/</a>
Paralyzed Veterans of America	<a href="https://pva.org/">https://pva.org/</a>

## LOCAL RESOURCES

Urban League of Greater Chattanooga	<a href="https://www.ulchatt.net/">https://www.ulchatt.net/</a>
Chattanooga Business Elite	<a href="https://www.chattbusinesselite.com/">https://www.chattbusinesselite.com/</a>
La Paz	<a href="https://www.lapazchattanooga.org/">https://www.lapazchattanooga.org/</a>
Bridge Refugee Services	<a href="https://www.bridgerefugees.org/">https://www.bridgerefugees.org/</a>
Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga	<a href="https://www.jewishchattanooga.com/">https://www.jewishchattanooga.com/</a>
Islamic Society of Greater Chattanooga	<a href="http://chattislam.com/">http://chattislam.com/</a>
Women's Fund of Greater Chattanooga	<a href="https://www.chattanoogawomensfund.org/">https://www.chattanoogawomensfund.org/</a>
Chattanooga Womens Leadership Institute	<a href="https://cwli.org/">https://cwli.org/</a>
Southeast Tennessee Veterans Coalition	<a href="https://www.setnvets.org/">https://www.setnvets.org/</a>
Southeast Tennessee SHRM	<a href="https://shrmchattanooga.com/">https://shrmchattanooga.com/</a>
Chattanooga Pride	<a href="https://www.chattanoogaapride.com/">https://www.chattanoogaapride.com/</a>
Mosaic at UTC	<a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/utc-mosaic-program/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/utc-mosaic-program/</a>
The Enterprise Center	<a href="https://www.theenterprisectr.org/">https://www.theenterprisectr.org/</a>
Chattanooga Autism Center	<a href="https://www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org/">https://www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org/</a>
Jobs4TN Adult Education	<a href="https://www.tn.gov/workforce/jobs-and-education/ae.html">https://www.tn.gov/workforce/jobs-and-education/ae.html</a>
Orange Grove Center	<a href="https://orangegrovecenter.org/">https://orangegrovecenter.org/</a>

If you know of a local resource not on this list but should be please reach out to us at [info@hintonandco.com](mailto:info@hintonandco.com)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Grateful to the 60 organizations who participated in this pilot initiative to increase awareness around the inclusive practices in the workplaces of Chattanooga's leading employers. Special thanks to the Urban League of Chattanooga for their invaluable partnership and commitment to excellence.

This work was only done with the generous support of sponsors and the partnership of subject matter experts in data analytics and communications. Their support was critical to moving this important initiative forward.

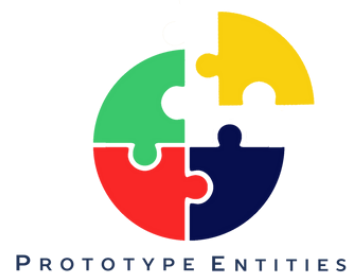
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